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In May last, Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, was requested to express an opinion of the value of the Classics. In reply he wrote a letter which is reproduced here with his consent:

Instead of expressing an opinion as to the value of the Classics in the abstract, I prefer to bear testimony to my own indebtedness to the severe training in the languages and literatures of Greece and of Rome which I received at school and in college. No revelations of beauty and of power have ever equalled those that were made to me by them. No discipline in attention, in logical analysis, or in philosophic interpretation has been so effective as was that gained from those studies. The range of human interests which they revealed and the beginnings of great movements and noble aspirations which they recorded have made the reading and the studies of later life take on a new significance. Speaking for myself, I should look upon life without the memories and the pleasures that center around and grow out of the study of the Classics as existence in an intellectual desert. C. K.

The question of the use and place of translations of the Classics will not down, whether it meets us in the form in which Professor Lockwood presented it to us once again in his earnest words in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 7.46, or in the form suggested by certain volumes of the Loeb Classical Library (see Professor Van Hook's remarks in his review of Way's translation of Euripides in 7.12).

In the Boston Transcript for September 17 last Mr. John J. Chapman, whose estimate of the Classics has been noted in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 4.49-50, gave expression to interesting views concerning poetical translations of the Classics. Evidently, in Mr. Chapman's opinion, the better such translations are, in the opinion of the layman, the worse they are from the point of view of the real lover of the Classics and for the Classics themselves. He wrote as follows:

I know not how it may be with other men, but to me, poetical translations of the Greek tragedians have ever been one of the disappointments and annoyances of life. The great reputations of the originals stand out as a never-dying taunt and challenge, luring on the adventurous soul. As he approaches the Greek text, these poetical versions pounce forward upon him, seize, bewilder, fatigue

and out-weary him with their thousand-fold flounces and flappings of literary contrivances. They dance like gypsies and pose like models, till he retires to his tent in disgust—retires miles and miles away, to his rightful avocation, to family life, politics and modern literature. Then again, it may be years later, on some fine day his attention is again caught by the looming Colossi afar off behind the huts of the preposterous scholars, and again he glances towards Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides.

Now there is a mean, sneaking, and despised band of hackmen, who, for a few pence, stand ready to give one a near view of the great figures. I mean the literal translations, and formerly these honest villains would really bring one up to the great creatures and show one something of their anatomy. To be sure, you were not in good society while in their company—you were not in literature, but you got a whiff and inkling that was of mighty interest; you got a Greek feeling, a gritty taste of truth; you could imagine the poetic form as readily as you could imagine the theatrical setting. I have noticed with alarm in more recent years a growing tendency of the Universities to suborn these useful hacks and to dress them in belles lettres. The varlets now wear shirt frills. The good old tramp translators are going out; and the Colossi are being enclosed by a syndicate of impenetrable literary ambition. It is a vain solace to remember Edward Fitzgerald and Gilbert Murray—and if you will, Browning, Swinburne, Matthew Arnold and the other translators of genius, who have enriched the English language with transfusions of amazing beauty, drawn from the Greek. The value of such men is a value added to modern life and to English literature. It all tends to advertise yet to obscure the Greek. They are in an unconscious conspiracy to befool the world with new sorceries and to enclose the oracles with an interpretation so dazzling and so engaging as to balk the curiosity of half the world.

In April, 1912, I heard Professor Shorey, in an address delivered at the University of Cincinnati, express himself in similar terms concerning Professor Murray's translations of Euripides. These translations, he said, were fine and splendid things, but they were not Euripides—at least as Euripides is understood by Professor Shorey and as he was understood and estimated by Aristophanes. Professor Shorey argued that Mr. Murray's translations quite frequently disguise the real nature of Euripidean choruses (to Aristophanes and to Professor Shorey artistically defective), and are therefore as unjust to the student who would reach the true Euripides as Aristophanes is in the opinion of those who can see no failings in Euripides the Human. C.K.